



Environmental Purchasing Bulletin

Natural Vegetation Management

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Please e-mail Karen Hamilton if you have comments, suggestions, or questions about the bulletin, or would like your name removed from the mailing list.



Introduction

King County Metro Transit hired a goat herder and 270 of his goats from Eastern Washington to assist with vegetation management last week at the Tukwila Park-and-Ride and at Metro's East Base in Bellevue. These two sites have been difficult for Metro to maintain due to steep hillsides and uneven ground. The goats are a more efficient way to control the weeds than crews of human workers, present less risk of injury to the human staff, and eliminate the need for chemical maintenance.

Natural Vegetation Management



270 goats happily ate weeds last week at the Tukwila Park-and-Ride and Bellevue's East Base.

They were hired by Metro Transit to help eradicate weeds from hard to maintain places, and as an environmentally preferable alternative to chemicals.

Using goats for weed control is not news to those who have spent time around these animals, but the idea to use them in urban environments is getting a lot of attention these days as people look around for cost-effective weed management that has low impacts on the environment.

Goats will do the hard work of clearing invasive plants, as they will eat almost anything and are built for hilly environments.

King County, following the footsteps of a few other local jurisdictions, contracted with Healing Hooves, LLC, an Eastern Washington company, to maintain weeds with goats. 270 goats and their kids arrived on-site with their shepherd, Craig Madsen, his dog assistant, Mac, and an electronic fence. These goats grazed at the Tukwila site for three days and at the Bellevue site for four days. They will come back in the fall to manage new growth.



For More Information

Articles

- [Metro gives goats a spin for weed control](#) (Metro press release)
- [Goats provide alternatives to chemicals for weed control](#) (Seattle PI 2005)
- [Goats make quick work of weeds](#) (Seattle PI, 2006)
- [Controlling Weeds with Goats and Sheep](#) (article by Craig Madsen, Healing Hooves, 2005)

Company

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Environmental Purchasing Program

The King County Environmental Purchasing Program assists County agencies in implementation of King County [Executive Policy CON-7-1-2](#), which requires agencies to use recycled and other environmentally preferable products wherever practicable.

The program assembles information about these products and makes it available to specific agency users who can evaluate them and develop applications in County projects.

These environmental purchasing bulletins contain information about the results of product evaluations and other accomplishments of County agencies. We hope this information will help you find ways to use environmentally preferable products in the work of your agency and that you will contact us if we can help you with further information or if you have suggestions.